

In the Claims:

Please cancel claim 4 without estoppel or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, and amend claims 1, 11, and 31, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for surgically treating tissue, the apparatus comprising:

a pair of yoke-shaped members mounted in spaced substantially plane parallel array, with each member formed as a substantially planar sheet including lines extending distally with a slotted opening extending inwardly between tines of the yoke from a forward edge thereof, and with the slotted openings of the members substantially transversely aligned to receive therein the tissue to be treated;

a cutter mounted intermediate the spaced members for movement in a plane parallel to and spaced from the members between an open configuration in which the cutter is displaced from obstructing transverse alignment of the slotted openings, and a closed configuration in which a cutting edge of the cutter passes through the transverse alignment of the slotted openings for transversely severing tissue disposed in the slotted openings and across the spacing of the members; and

an actuator linked to the cutter for controlling movement thereof in the plane spaced from the members between the open and closed configurations.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as in claim 1 including a mounting structure disposed at the distal end of an elongated body to support the

members in spaced array with the slotted openings substantially aligned in a direction along an elongated axis of the body, the mounting structure also supporting the cutter for movement intermediate the members; and

the actuator extends along the body toward a proximal end thereof; and further comprising:

a manual manipulator mounted near the proximal end of the body and linked to the actuator for selectively moving the cutter between the open and closed configurations in response to manual actuation of the manipulator.

3.-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 2 in which the width of each of the slotted openings convergingly tapers inwardly from the forward edge.

6.-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as in claim 31 in which the cutter is disposed to move translationally along a direction aligned with the elongated axis of the body and laterally toward the anvil during transition from the open configuration to the closed configuration.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as in claim 9 in which the cutter includes a contoured surface for engaging a reference surface to transform

translational movement of the cutter into translational and lateral movement relative to the anvil.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as in claim 10 in which the contoured surface of the cutter includes an edge thereof proximally remote from the cutting edge disposed to engage the reference surface that is fixed relative to the body for urging the cutting edge toward the anvil in response to translational motion of the cutter in a direction toward the proximal end of the body.

12.-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Withdrawn) Apparatus for surgically treating tissue, the apparatus comprising:

an outer loop member mounted at a distal end of an elongated body;

an inner loop member mounted at the distal end of the elongated body, spaced from the outer loop member and intersecting an area confined by the outer loop member;

a cutter mounted intermediate the inner and outer loop members and spaced away therefrom for movement between an open configuration in which the cutter is displaced from obstructing a region between areas confined by the inner and outer loop members, and a closed configuration in which the cutter transverses said region; and

an actuator linked to the cutter for controlling movement thereof between the open and closed configuration.

15. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 14 in which the cutter includes a hook-shaped cutting edge disposed to traverse said region between the inner and outer loop members during movement between the open and closed configurations.

16. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 14 in which the inner and outer loop members are conductive to form electrodes for receiving cauterizing electrical signal applied thereto.

17. (Withdrawn) Apparatus for surgically treating tissue, the apparatus comprising:

a cutter mounted for translational movement relative to a distal end of an elongated supporting body, the cutter including a proximal cutting edge disposed substantially normally to the direction of translational movement thereof between an open configuration in which the cutting edge is spaced away from the distal end, and a closed configuration in which the cutting edge substantially abuts the distal end;

a loop member extending from the distal end and disposed about and away from the cutter to confine an area overlaying the cutting edge; and

an actuator linked to the cutter for controlling movement thereof between the open and closed configurations.

18. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 17 in which the loop member is skewed relative to the direction of translational movement of the cutter to substantially converge with the cutter near the distal end.

19. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 17 including a resilient layer disposed at the distal end of the body to abut the cutting edge in the closed configuration.

20. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 18 including an actuator linked to the loop member for selectively altering the skew and area of the loop member overlaying the cutter.

21. (Withdrawn) Apparatus for surgically treating tissue, the apparatus comprising:

a tissue cutter mounted at a distal end of an elongated body for angular rotation about an axis substantially aligned with the elongated body;

a manual actuator mounted near a proximal end of the body for rotation at one radius about an axis substantially aligned with the elongated body;

an element coupled to the manual actuator for rotation therewith at another radius shorter than the one radius about an axis substantially aligned with the elongated body; and

linkage coupling the element and the tissue cutter for rotating the tissue cutter through one angle in response to rotation of the actuator through a smaller angle than said one angle.

22. (Withdrawn) Apparatus according to claim 21 in which the manual manipulator includes a first member configured for actuation substantially in alignment with the elongated body and coupled thereto to selectively advance distally and retract proximally the tissue cutter, and includes a second member configured for actuation along a path substantially in alignment with the elongated body, and coupled to a blade of the tissue cutter for relatively moving the blade of the tissue cutter through a tissue-cutting movement in response to movement in a distal direction of the second member relative to the first member.

23. (Withdrawn) Apparatus for the surgical treatment of tissue, the apparatus comprising:

a tissue-dissecting tip mounted at a distal end of an elongated body and having exterior walls for engaging tissue that converge toward a distal apex;

a tissue cutter including a first cutter blade having a cutting edge positioned in substantial alignment with a portion of the exterior walls and oriented toward the distal apex, and including a second cutter blade mounted for relative movement with respect to the first cutter blade to cooperate therewith in cutting tissue disposed between the first and second cutter blades; and

an actuator coupled to the second cutter blade for moving the second cutter blade relative to the first cutter blade in response to translational movement of the actuator in a direction substantially aligned along the elongated body.

24. (Withdrawn) Apparatus as in claim 23 in which the second cutter blade is pivotally mounted relative to the first cutter blade to cooperate therewith in shearing tissue in scissor-like manner responsive to translational movement of the actuator.

25. (Withdrawn) Apparatus for surgically treating tissue, the apparatus comprising:

a tissue-dissecting tip mounted at a distal end of an elongated body having a lumen extending therethrough substantially between the distal end and a proximal end thereof;

a fluid outlet formed near the distal end of the elongated body and communicating with the lumen extending through the body; and

a fluid inlet disposed near the proximal end of the body in fluid communication with said lumen for supplying fluid under pressure received thereat to the fluid outlet near the distal end of the body.

26. (Withdrawn) The apparatus as in claim 25 in which the lumen terminates interiorly of the tissue-dissecting tip; and

the fluid outlet communicates with the interior of the tip for venting from the tip fluid under pressure supplied thereto along the lumen.

27. (Withdrawn) The apparatus as in claim 26 in which the tissue-dissecting tip is transparent, and said lumen is aligned with the tip to receive an endoscope therein for visualizing tissue dissection through the tip, and to supply fluid under pressure to the interior of the tip through said lumen.

28. (Withdrawn) The apparatus as in claim 25 in which the fluid outlet includes a spacer structure interposed between an exterior surface of the elongated body near the distal end thereof and the interior of the tissue-dissecting tip for supplying fluid under pressure therethrough at a location displaced proximally from the distal extent of the tissue-dissecting tip.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Original) The apparatus as in claim 10 in which the reference surface is disposed to resiliently bias the cutter toward the anvil in engagement with at least a portion of the contoured surface of the cutter.

31. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for surgically treating tissue, the apparatus comprising:

a pair of yoke-shaped members mounted in spaced array, with each member operable as an electrode of one or other polarity and including a slotted opening

extending inwardly between tines of the yoke from a forward edge thereof, and with the slotted openings of the members substantially transversely aligned;

a cutter mounted intermediate the spaced members for movement between an open configuration in which the cutter is displaced from obstructing transverse alignment of the slotted openings, and a closed configuration in which a cutting edge of the cutter passes through the transverse alignment of the slotted openings; and

an actuator linked to the cutter for controlling movement thereof between the open and closed configurations, the actuator extending along the body toward a proximal end thereof;

a mounting structure disposed at the distal end of an elongated body to support the members in spaced array with the slotted openings substantially aligned in a direction along an elongated axis of the body, the mounting structure also supporting the cutter for movement intermediate the members, the mounting structure including an anvil interposed between corresponding ones of the tines of each of the pair of members displaced from obstructing a transverse alignment of the slotted openings and extending substantially to the forward edges of the members, with the cutting edge of the cutter disposed to substantially engage the anvil in the closed configuration; and

a manual manipulator mounted near the proximal end of the body and linked to the actuator for selectively moving the cutter between the open and closed configurations in response to manual actuation of the manipulator.